



[Dedication of the Temple of Fortuna Augusta \(CIL X, 820\)](#) [1]

The dedication of the Temple of Augustan Fortune in the Forum of Pompeii.

Typology (Honorific / Funerary / etc.): Dedication.

Original Location/Place: Temple of Augustan Fortune, Reg VII, Ins 4, 1, Pompeii.

Actual Location (Collection/Museum): Naples Archaeological Museum (inventory number: MN 3853).

Date: 3 CE

Physical Characteristics:

Inscribed on the architrave of the shrine at the rear of the *cella* of the temple.

Material: Marble

Language: Latin

Category: Roman

Publications: *CIL* X, 820 (*ILS* 5398)

Commentary: In the first years of the first century CE a pseudo-peripteral Corinthian temple to *Fortuna Augusta* was built and dedicated at an important intersection just north of the Forum in Pompeii (van Andringa, "M. Tullius...", p. 101). The temple was built by a member of the local aristocracy, Marcus Tullius, who also donated the plot of private land on which it stood. A monumental arch was built just beyond the temple, and he also donated the land for a portico along the street leading towards it, which had the cumulative effect of extending the monumental core of the town beyond the limits of the Forum (Cooley, *Pompeii and Herculaneum*, p. 134). This was an enormous endeavour for a private citizen, and provided the town with a focal point for its demonstration of loyalty to the imperial regime.

The success of Augustus' reign depended in part on the successful adoption in Italy and the provinces of his ideological programme; it celebrated 'traditional' Roman concepts of religious and moral propriety, which were used to emphasise the security and stability that his rule provided, particularly through the establishment of the imperial cult. The leading members of the different communities of the Roman World attempted to express their gratitude to the regime in the construction of new buildings, the restoration of others and in some cases, as Roger Ling has explained, 'to secure their personal advancement by sponsoring building programmes which honoured the emperor or promoted his ideals' (Ling, *Pompeii*, p. 67). This is likely to have been the motivation for Marcus Tullius's donation and dedication of the temple in Pompeii. At the time of the building's construction he was at the height of his public and political career; the list of magistracies (*cursus honorum*) described in the inscription reveals that he had served as *duumvir*, one of the two leaders of the town council, on several occasions and had been appointed one of the two *quinquennales* – the most prestigious municipal magistracy that a private citizen could be elected to, and which carried the responsibility of performing the municipal census every five years. The role of *quinquennalis* was particularly significant as it gave the holders complete control over the town council and the civil rights of its citizens; they held the power to exclude councillors considered unsatisfactory in the role, and nominate new members of the *ordo*, sometimes allowing them to bypass the magistracies usually necessary for membership (Castrén, *Ordo populusque* p. 66-7. See *CIL* X, 846). Although it is not possible to be certain from the epigraphic evidence, it would appear that he had reached the peak of his political life in Pompeii by the time the temple was built. This is indicated in part by the further accolade given in the inscription, that Marcus Tullius had been awarded a 'military tribune by recommendation of the people' (*tribunus militum a populo*). This was an honorific title attested epigraphically only during the Augustan period, and only in Italian municipalities, and was bestowed directly upon a citizen by the emperor to nominees proposed by the town council (Castrén, *Ordo populusque* p. 98-9; Zanker, *Pompeii*, p. 81-2). The honour was especially important as it promoted its recipients to equestrian rank, the social status of whom received new prominence under Augustus (Suetonius *Augustus*, 46). In the municipalities of Italy, these new equestrian families became the new 'aristocracy', grouping their shared power together in almost total control of their towns; power which had been conferred upon them "by virtue of individual relationships or obligations contracted with the *princeps*" (Castrén, *Ordo populusque* p. 99). This honorary tribunate therefore increased Marcus Tullius's nobility and put him in contact with the imperial regime; the selection of this particular cult, *Fortuna Augusta*, and the dedication of the temple should be understood as a direct response to the closer acquaintance of Tullius with the emperor, and a demonstration of his loyalty (Zanker, *Pompeii*, p. 82; Ling, *Pompeii* p. 67). As William van Andringa has stated, "the relationship motivated the strong ideological and political focus of the cult" ("M. Tullius...", p. 103).



The style of the building also emphasised the relationship; just as the Eumachia Building emulated the intentions of the porticus of Livia in Rome, and took architectural inspiration from the *Ara Pacis*, the Altar of Augustan Peace, decorating the marble architrave of the entrance to the building with acanthus leaves copied directly from screen of the altar, the Temple of *Fortuna Augusta* similarly mimicked temple constructions in Rome through its marble façade and the Corinthian style of the column capitals (Zanker *Pompeii*, p. 82). The main chamber of the temple (*cella*) also contained niches down its long sides, into which statues of the benefactor and his family might be placed; the excavation of one male toga-clad figure, dated to the Augustan period, has been conjectured to be that of Marcus Tullius himself, just as statues of Augustus stood in the temples of the traditional Roman gods in Rome (Zanker *Pompeii*, p. 84; *Power of Images*, p. 322). The donation of private land for the temple can also be said to be in direct imitation of Augustus's construction of the Temple of Apollo on his own private property on the Palatine Hill. Just as Tullius states in the building inscription here, Augustus dedicated the temple 'on his own land and at his own expense' (*solo et pecunia sua*), indicating not only his devotion to the religious life of Rome, but also the restoration of harmonious relations between the public and private spheres under his leadership (Andringa, "M. Tullius...", p. 108).

The construction and dedication of the temple has been dated to the first years of the first century CE, based on the discovery of an inscription on a statue base found in the *cella* of the temple which records the first 'attendants' of the cult of *Fortuna Augusta*, and is dated to 3 CE (CIL X, 824). Special favour had been accorded to the goddess *Fortuna* since 19 BCE, when an altar was dedicated to *Fortuna Redux* at the Porta Capena in Rome, to celebrate Augustus' safe return from campaigns in the east. Further shrines to *Fortuna* were constructed in the capital and other Italian cities following Augustus's departure for the Western part of the empire in 13 BCE, culminating in the dedication of an altar to 'Augustan Peace' (*Pax Augusta*) upon his return in 9 BCE (van Andringa, "M. Tullius...", p. 103; Zanker, *Pompeii*, p. 82). However, as William van Andringa has noted, the temple set up in Pompeii was more distinct than these shrines: "Fortuna is not *Redux* or *Augusti*...but *Augusta*, a name that could express the proximity between the goddess and the ambitious political action of Augustus" (van Andringa, "M. Tullius...", p. 103). 'Augustan Fortune' was clearly, therefore, a new cult, conceived with the express purpose of celebrating the establishment and aims of the principate. It marked a new age, one in which the "city began to forge a close relationship with the new imperial power through a member of its elite" (van Andringa, "M. Tullius...", p. 104).

The spread of the imperial cult in the provinces in the Augustan period is well documented (e.g. Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*; Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*), and was not limited to the promotion of the emperor alone; statues of living members of the imperial family, such as Livia, Agrippa, Caius and Drusus, also began to be set up in public sanctuaries, so that by the end of the first century CE, the imperial cult had developed into the central and most important cult in almost all provincial towns, and crucially without the visible encouragement of the emperor. Just as Marcus Tullius demonstrated in Pompeii, the dedication of a building or monument that honoured Augustus or a member of his household permitted citizens far from Rome to express their loyalty to the emperor and to interact with the ideology and expectations of the regime in a way that emphasised the unity and harmony of the world that it had brought them. The construction of monuments or buildings for the imperial cult provided elite citizens like Marcus Tullius with the right opportunities for social and political advancement; euergetic dedications and donations of private funds to public spaces permitted these citizens to exercise their superior social and financial status, but within a politically acceptable framework that did not undermine the ruling family in Rome. However, the imperial cult also afforded those of lower social status the opportunity to engage with similar demonstrations of allegiance; inscriptions across the empire (although more commonly in the Latin west than the east) attest to those responsible for the administration of the cult and reveal them to have been selected largely from the slave and freedmen communities across the Roman world (see e.g. CIL X, 824). It is clear that the cult provided a focus of loyalty for all levels of Roman society, from the lowest visible strata, those of servile origin, through to the very top. Slaves could honour the emperor through serving his cult as 'attendants', and a leading citizen could demonstrate the full extent of his beneficence and generosity through donating his own private land for the purpose of public celebration. He marked "not only his devotion to the state, but also managed to highlight the strong influence of the local elite in the construction of public cults and the celebration of *publica sacra*" (van Andringa, "M. Tullius...", p. 103). However, it provided a more ideological platform too; the inscription and dedication of the Temple allowed Marcus Tullius to act as the *princeps* of his own community, translating the new religious and social behaviour exemplified by the emperor into a 'local' form that both made sense to its new audience and permitted the visible demonstration of their loyalty.

Keywords in the original language:



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- [augur](#) [4]
- [tribunus militum](#) [5]
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[Dedication of the ministri of the cult of Augustan Fortune \(CIL X, 824\) \[27\]](#)

The earliest known dedication of the attendants of the cult of Augustan Fortune in Pompeii.

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